

SPENNYMOOR URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.Medical Officer's Annual Report.

October, 1947.

To the Chairman & Members of the
Spennymoor Urban District Council.

Mr. Chairman, Lady & Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present to you my Annual Report upon the vital statistics and sanitary work of your district for the year ending March 31st, 1947.

This report is necessarily brief and covers the main activities of the Department.

Particulars have been supplied by the Registrar General relating to the estimated population, number of births and the number of deaths and tabular statements have therefore been prepared giving this information.

1. Population.

The estimated population as given by the Registrar General is 18,710, this figure shows an increase of 640 over the previous year.

2. Area.

The District covers 7,494 acres and includes the villages of Middlestone Moor, Byers Green, and Kirk Merrington.

3. Inhabited Houses.

5,234.

4. Rateable Value.

£73, 496.

5. Rate Income.

The income from a penny rate levy is £265.

6. Extracts from Vital Statistics of the Year.

<u>Births</u>	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	218	213	431
Illegitimate	15	8	23
	233	221	454

Birth Rate - 24.26 per 1,000 population is most satisfactory and shows a rise of 4.26 over last year and 5.16 above the average for the Country.

<u>Still Births</u>	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	8	10	18
Illegitimate	1	1	2
	9	11	20

Rate for Still Births - 1.06 and is an increase of .29 over the previous year.

<u>Deaths</u>	Males	Females	Total
	130	103	233

Death Rate - 12.45 per 1,000 population showing an increase of .67 per 1,000 over the previous year.

Infantile Mortality

All infants per 1,000 births

	Males	Females	Total
Legitimate	10	10	20
Illegitimate	1	—	1
	11	10	21

Infantile Mortality Rate - 48.68 an increase of 5.44 over the previous year.

7. National Statistics.

	Births.	Still Births.	Deaths.	Inf. Mort.
England & Wales	19.1	0.53	11.5	43.
126 County Boroughs	22.2	0.67	12.7	46.
148 Smaller Towns	21.3	0.59	11.7	37.
London Adm. County	21.5	0.54	12.7	41.

8. Summary of Infectious Diseases Deaths.

Deaths from:-	Cerebro spinal fever	1
	Pulmonary tuberculosis	19
	Non-pulmonary tuberculosis	3
	Pneumonia	5

9. Tabular statement of the Notifications of Infectious Diseases in the District During the Year.

<u>Disease</u>	<u>Cases notified in the District.</u>
Scarlet Fever	33
Whooping Cough	115
Tuberculosis	43
Diphtheria	10
Erysipelas	1
Pneumonia	31
Measles	294
Meningitis	1
Typhoid	1
Dysentery	3
Puerperal Pyrexia	2

10. Tuberculosis.

The number of cases of Tuberculosis remaining on the Register on the 31st March, 1947, were as follows:-

Pulmonary -	Males	63	Non-pulmonary -	Males	38
	Females	68		Females	43
					81

These figures show increases of 11.01% in pulmonary cases and 6.58% in non-pulmonary cases notified during the year.

The deaths from this disease also show an increase of 57.14% over the previous year.

It is my opinion that these increases can be attributed to the lowering of people's resistance through continued austerity living and the seriously overcrowded condition of many dwelling houses in the District.

11. Diphtheria Immunisation.

It is to be regretted that the Public have not responded better to the efforts of this Council in conjunction with the County Council, to secure 100% immunisation of all children. The number of children immunised during the year shows a decrease upon the previous year.

Particulars of the position at the 31st December, 1946, are given below:-

	<u>Under 5 yrs.</u>	<u>5-15 yrs.</u>
(1) Estimated number of children residing in the area 31st December, 1946.	1,718	3,401
(2) Total number of children immunised 31st December, 1946.	349	1,900
(3) Percentage of child population considered to be immunised at 31st December, 1946.	20.31%	55.86%
(4) Number of children immunised during the year 1946.	147	17

12. Infestation.

I am pleased to record the resumption of the Council's pre-war policy of disinfection during transit of all tenants' furniture upon removal to new Council property. This work is very efficiently performed by the London Fumigation Company and no complaints have been received of any damage or ill effects from the work. During the year, the occupants' furniture of 50 pre-fabricated bungalows has been disinfested during transit.

The furniture of the remaining 16 tenants to occupy the pre-fabricated bungalows upon completion will be similarly treated.

Instructions have also been received from the Council for this disinfection method to be used for tenants' furniture prior to removal into the permanent houses, now in course of erection.

This step is justified owing to the seriously infested condition of many houses in the George Street Areas. The Council has already agreed that the tenants of this property be removed into the new houses. The vacated property will be demolished to allow of new streets being constructed for further Housing work.

Appropriate disinfection work is also carried out in older property upon application by owners or occupiers.

13. Housing.

It is with great pleasure that I can review the Council's energetic programme for re-housing in the District. The 66 pre-fabricated bungalows upon the Archer's Field are now being occupied. 50 by ex-service applicants and 16 by civilian applicants. Work is also in progress upon the erection of 112 permanent brick houses and 100 B.I.S.F. houses upon the Park Estate. Plans are also being prepared for the erection of approximately 168 houses upon the Tudhoe Moor Estate, 128 houses upon the York Hill Estate, the completion of the Park Estate with a further 88 houses, also pre-fabricated bungalows for Miners upon sites at Middlestone Moor and Kirk Merrington.

The structural condition of many houses in the area gives rise to serious concern for the welfare of the occupants. The property in addition to being of a poor type, has been neglected throughout the war and now it is found most difficult to obtain very necessary repairs, owing to the serious shortage of materials and labour for this class of work.

During the five months the Council accepted applications for houses, over 1,000 applications were received and we are inundated with enquiries from the Public regarding their chances for council houses.

A "Points Scheme" has been devised and put into operation by the Council with these applications, allowances being made for overcrowding, previous applications, slum clearance or sub-standard property, infectious disease and shared accommodation. By the use of this method in conjunction with personal investigation, it is hoped that the families with the greatest need are allocated the new houses. The extent of overcrowding in these applications, is found to be considerable.

14. Scabies.

An appreciable increase has been found in the number of cases notified during the year, the 116 notifications received show an increase of 50 over the preceding year, the treatments however at the Council's Cleansing Centre are slightly less than last year.

The smaller number of treatments however, is attributable to the less severe nature of the cases attending for treatment and is a very satisfactory pointer that the Council's arrangements over the preceding years, for the treatment of this infestation, are succeeding. We also undertake the treatment of patients sent in from Sedgefield Rural District Council area and Crook & Willington Urban District Council.

15. Rodent Control.

During the year the Rodent Operator, employed by the Council has carried out the second treatment of the Council's sewers also the resurvey and treatment under a Block System, of all private property within the District known to have had previous infestations. Work has also been carried out in this direction at the Government Trading Estate, on behalf of the occupiers. I do not think this district has been so free of rats, as it is at present, for many years.

The work of the Rodent Operator is tabulated below:-

Premises Treated.	Estimated Kill.	Bodies found.
39 Shops & Business Premises }		
124 Private Property }	1,662	561

16. Water Supply.

The Durham County Water Board are responsible for the supply of water to the District, with the exception of certain farms and isolated property, the whole of the District is supplied with a piped supply.

The water is soft and obtained from gathering grounds in Weardale. A satisfactory degree of purity is maintained and systematic sampling is carried out by the Water Board. Complaints of the absence or poor supply of water, are usually found to be due to the age and encrusted condition of the supplying mains. The Water Board carry out frequent scraping of such mains and this is usually followed by complaints from the tenants that the water is then adequate in quantity but contains a large amount of sediment.

17. Sewerage and Sewage Disposal.

The Council's main sewage works at Tudhoe Village is responsible for the treatment of the sewage from the greater part of the Urban District. A smaller works at Byers Green is also used and a Sewage Works at Leasingthorpe in the Bishop Auckland Urban Area, deals with the sewage under arrangement, for the village of Kirk Merrington.

A considerable number of choked drains in private property have been reported. Many of these drains are found to be in a defective condition when opened.

The Council grant of £3.10.0. towards the cost of each conversion has resulted in 37 conversions to the Water Carriage System being carried out during the year. The number of conversions carried out is relatively small, when it is considered that we still have 3,903 dry receptacles in the District. I would like to see greater publicity given to the Council's offer of a grant towards the cost of converting these very insanitary receptacles.

18. Ambulance Service.

This service inaugurated by the Council after the war has continued to expand and is greatly appreciated in the District. During the year 826 cases were conveyed by the two ambulances to and from hospitals in the surrounding districts. 24,965 miles were covered and the receipts for this work amounted to £832.3.4d. It is expected that the Council will lose these ambulances under the New National Health Service Act. This duty will be placed upon the County Council, who will become the Local Health Authority. A scheme of re-organisation is being drawn up by the County Council, and it is hoped that this scheme will provide for ambulances to be stationed in this district, the increasing number of private calls together with accident cases from the Trading Estate are a sufficient argument for this course to be adopted.

... S. V. TINSLEY

Medical Officer of Health.

